

THE APOLOGY OF PATRIOTS,

OR

*The heresy of the friends of the Washington and
peace policy defended.*

A

SERMON,

PREACHED IN

WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS,

ON THE DAY OF THE

NATIONAL FAST,

THURSDAY, AUGUST 20, 1812.

OBSERVED IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE RECOMMENDATION OF

JAMES MADISON,

PRESIDENT OF THE

UNITED STATES;

AND IN CONSEQUENCE OF THE DECLARATION OF WAR

AGAINST GREAT-BRITAIN.

BY SAMUEL AUSTIN, D. D.

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THE BIOGRAPHY OF PATRIOTS

THE HISTORY OF THE REVOLUTION OF THE UNITED STATES
FROM 1763 TO 1789

SYMMONS

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CHRISTIANITY was a heresy in the estimate of the Jewish Doctors ; and, according to their decisions, its adherents were liable to a capital punishment. The federal policy is a heresy in the estimate of our National Rulers, and obnoxious, if not to legal penalties, to their severe animadversion. It would be no small gratification of curiosity to trace the analogy between these reputed heresies and their opposites. The reader will do it, if he please, in his own mind. Christianity is but a developement, or farther exposition, and execution, of the religion contained in the Old Testament Scriptures. Judaism, which entirely excluded the doctrine of a Saviour, and which consisted in a course of external observances, founded principally in a traditionary law, of mere human authority, was a corruption of that religion, and the real heresy. Hence, for the defence of Christianity, the Apostles constantly appealed, when they had before them Jewish auditors, to the Law, and the Prophets ; and it was a leading object with them to subvert Judaism, as the grand obstacle to the progress of the Gospel.

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SERMON.

ACTS, xxiv. 14.

BUT THIS I CONFESS UNTO THEE, THAT AFTER THE WAY WHICH THEY CALL HERESY, SO WORSHIP I THE GOD OF MY FATHERS ; BELIEVING ALL THINGS WHICH ARE WRITTEN IN THE LAW AND IN THE PROPHETS.

MY BRETHREN,

THE grand heresy of our Country, at the present time, is disagreement with the administration of our government, in the character it has chosen to assume, in the course it has taken, since it went into operation, in its restrictive measures, and, particularly, in regard to the war into which it has recently plunged the nation. This heresy is denounced by the administration and by all its zealous adherents. It seems to be determined to overwhelm it, either *by* law, or *without* law ; either by an organized force, or by putting in motion desperate, and unprincipled individuals, who, from the little interest they have in the publick welfare, and from habits of licentiousness, are prepared for outrage and massacre. The machinery of compulsion has begun to act, and how far it will proceed it is impossible for any man to say. But as the spirit of Paul could not languish, while he had so great a charge from his omnipotent Redeemer, as the propagation of his religion among the Gentiles, notwithstanding it was a fact, that, in every city, bonds and afflictions attended him ; so it is not probable that that love to God, and virtue, and the general happiness of our Country which pos-

sesses the minds of a considerable portion of the American people, will shrink from those persevering efforts which may seem to promise to dissipate the delusion, and to change the measures, which threaten our national destruction. The heresy mentioned has an extensive and increasing acceptance all over our Country ; but is most prevalent in these northern states, where, we flatter ourselves, the Christian doctrine has most influence, and the principles and measures of genuine Republicanism are best understood. This heresy is the crime of almost all the professors of religion in New-England, I mean those whose religion, in the doctrines and modes of it, corresponds with that of our pious forefathers. It is the crime of almost the whole body of congregational ministers in this section of the United States ; and it is the crime of thousands of prudent and stable patriots, who were the most active in council, and the most valiant in arms, in achieving the grand object of the revolution. With this crime I stand charged, by, it is probable, a majority of my parishioners, and fellow-townsmen ; and to this charge I frankly plead guilty. With the unreservedness of the Apostle to the Gentiles, and I hope with a little of his consciousness of right, when he stood before Felix as his judge, and in presence of his accusers, who had come down from Jerusalem to Cesarea to follow up a prosecution against him, this I confess unto you, " that, after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things that are written in the law and in the prophets." As Paul was permitted to make his apology before Felix, and was attentively heard by him through the whole of his discourse, notwithstanding he was of a religion which it was the design and tendency of Paul's heresy to extirpate ; so I hope you will permit me to make my apology* before you, for myself, my fellow Christians, and fellow Countrymen, with whom I have the honor to agree in what concerns the safety

* The careless reader must not take the term apology here in the sense of concession, as it is more commonly used, for no concession is intended ; but in the sense of *defence*, which is the proper ecclesiastical sense, as we speak of the apology of Justin Martyr.

and prosperity of the nation, through the whole of what it shall seem to me proper, and reasonable to say on the subject. The apology which will be offered to your attention will go, in the whole of it, to the defence of this heresy. This I hope will not be thought unsuitable to the occasion; especially when it is considered what kind of a fast it is that God hath chosen, which he expressly tells us is this, that we "loose the bands of wickedness, undo the heavy burdens, let the oppressed go free, and that we break every yoke; that we deal our bread to the hungry, that we bring the poor that are cast out to our house; that when we see the naked we cover him, and that we hide not ourselves from our own flesh;" and when it is considered, that if the apology shall appear to be founded in truth and evidence, abundant causes of penitent reflection and prayer will be presented. It must be obvious besides, that this will perfectly coincide with the proclamation which has called us together, so far as the sentiments expressed in it coincide with evidence and fact.

This apology will be

I. Personal.

II. It will respect the body of Congregational ministers, and the greater body of American patriots, who stand charged with the heresy mentioned, in a personal view.

III. It will respect the nature of this heresy; and

IV. It will shew what will be the salutary and benign effects, should this heresy triumph in our country, and supercede, by a general influence, that philosophic and political orthodoxy, which, to our eye, is a mere system of infidelity, infatuation and ruin.

In the first place then you will permit me, that this apology should be a little personal. It is not indeed, in ordinary cases, very decorous for a speaker to discourse to his auditors respecting himself. But on some occasions it is warrantable, and even necessary; and we have many examples of it in the sacred scripture, and particularly we have one in the very apology of Paul which is, at this time, before us. He says to Felix, "And they neither found me in the temple disputing with any man, neither in the synagogue, nor in the city;

neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuse me." As prejudices are known to exist against me, founded partly in religious, partly, perhaps most, in political, consideration ; and some have carried their most unfounded resentments so far, as, for a time at least, to leave my congregation, a short personal apology will not be deemed improper.

I came among you, my friends, not obtrusively, but in compliance with request. My settlement here, as a minister, was not in consequence of any solicitation of mine, but in submission to the almost unanimous and repeated call of the Church and Congregation.

It is nearly twenty two years since my installation took place ; almost the whole of the Church, who united in this transaction, are in their graves. But a single, now acting, and resident, male member survives. A large proportion of what was then the congregation are also gone to the house of silence. During the time that has elapsed since my installation, according to the maturity of your years, and the period of your residence in the town, I have been in the midst of you, going in and out, in the pulpit, at conferences, in your houses, at the bedside of sickness and death, and attending your funerals. You have heard my doctrine and prayers, and you have seen my conversation. Certainly a thousand weaknesses, and deficiencies have attended them ; but you are witnesses, and God also, that my doctrine has been according to his word ; that in prayer I have sought with some apparent desire to draw down spiritual and everlasting blessings upon you. In regard to my moral walk, it is but justice to say, that I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel ; ye, you yourselves know, that, for about eighteen years I have patiently borne the reduction of my stipulated salary to about half its original value, and that these hands have ministered to my necessities and to them that have been with me.

In regard to political subjects the personal apology is perhaps more important. My being a disciple of Christ and a minister of his Gospel, does not separate me from civil society, strip me of civil privileges, or make it proper for me to be indifferent to the safety and welfare of the nation. I have

a right with other citizens to the elective franchise, and to the protection of law, to form opinions of public men and measures, and, on all suitable occasions, to declare them ; to use the little influence I possess to promote the good, and prevent the evil. At the same time you perfectly know, the appeal may be made to all my people with safety on this point, that my conversation with them has not been upon political subjects ; that my preaching has never been of that character, except one or two fast sermons, which some have chosen to understand as partaking somewhat of that description ; and that almost as little has been done by me to proselyte, as if no political controversy existed. Never have I voted. Patiently have I given up my rights in this respect, to keep in a little quiet, that political prejudice, that strong party zeal, which can endure nothing but what is promotive of its own designs.

I had my birth and education in a State more perfectly republican than any other. When the revolutionary war began, I was too young to be obliged, by law, to perform military duty, and never was liable to any coercion of that kind. Yet I repeatedly volunteered in arms, and was with the army at the most perilous periods, and in the most perilous situations. My life was spared to permit me to see the war auspiciously terminated, and to partake in the general joy, which the establishment of the independence of the country, and the restoration of peace, produced. Certainly my acquaintance with political subjects was then, and ever has been, limited and imperfect. A little attention however I have bestowed on these matters ; and have endeavoured to form my judgement, impartially and upon evidence.* Of the desirableness and

* It is true that religion is the proper business of the Gospel minister. Yet it is not to be forgotten that a prosperous civil government is intimately connected with the progress of religion—else, Why is civil government an ordinance of God ? And do not political convulsions, and especially a state of war, create great obstacles to the progress of religion ? The same benevolence then, which will induce a minister, to seek with zeal the spiritual good of his fellow men, will lead him to give some attention to political subjects, and to seek the preservation, and welfare of the government under which he lives. And there is no situation in life, more exempt from those sinister influences which blind the understanding, and pervert the judgement.

right of our independence, as a people, which was achieved by this war ; of the preferableness of a republican form of government to that of any other imagined, or put in practice by man ; of the excellency of our Constitution generally considered ; and of the wisdom of the administration of it, contemplated on a like general scale, and with very few and trifling exceptions, during the first twelve years it was in operation, I have had but one opinion. My political creed has been invariable, as that of my religion. Some improvements and additions may have been made to each ; but the ground-work has been unalterably the same. And, lest I should be tedious, in protracting this personal apology, I will take leave only in this serious and public manner to declare, that the utmost of my wishes, at present, is, to see the prudent and systematic, the impartial, energetic and effectual policy, of WASHINGTON, and his adherents, return ; and that I deliberately, and as much as ever, prefer a republican form of government, to any aristocracy, monarchy, or despotism, that the restlessness and ambition of individuals would introduce. I declare myself a friend of liberty and of the people ; and to be opposed, most heartily, to every thing oppressive, in Church and in State. Do not these fundamental sentiments accord with your own ? If not, on which side has the aberration been ? Where does the real political heresy stick ? If they do, Is there so great a difference, at bottom, as you imagined ? And why these resentments, and these unkind and indignant expressions of them ?

Have any of you gone to the school of French atheism and revolution, the hot-bed of faction and massacre, faction and massacre inevitably terminating in anarchy or despotism ? I I have not gone with you, and never will go. Have you conjured up, by the aid of political magicians, new-fangled notions of liberty and the rights of man, with which your forefathers had no acquaintance ? And have you entered upon the philosophic *projet* of extirpating Christianity ; prostrating the most useful religious institutions, which it has been the glory of New England to have so carefully cherished ; levelling all distinctions in civil society ; equalizing property, and opening

the flood-gates of lawless licentiousness? Then we are fundamentally at disagreement; and I declare to you plainly that I will have no part in your crimes or your follies.

2. The apology now presented is to have respect to the great body of Congregational ministers, and the greater body of Washingtonian patriots, through the country, in a personal view. This apology is not to regard their conduct as men; still less is it to go to prove that they are all of them religious men; but to rebut those most unjust imputations, and the force of those reproachful epithets, which are designed to spread an inveterate prejudice against them, and to weaken and disappoint all their efforts to save the sinking nation.

It is a fact, perfectly known to all who were of an age admitting of their acquaintance with the state of things at the Revolution, that the congregational clergy were, almost to a man, in favour of what was called the cause of the country. It is a fact that, with an admirable consistency and uniformity, which has distinguished them from all other classes of men, they have, during the intervening period, retained the same principles and attachments, and held the same ground. It is a fact that, at the present moment, they hold the same ground, and feel and act from the same views. The exceptions I believe, and I have had an opportunity to know them, much beyond what is ordinary, are not more than one to fifty.

It is a fact, that the far greater body of Washingtonian patriots, who now constitute the peace party, are, with a few exceptions, either those who stood boldly forward and hazarded their lives in the revolutionary cause, and had a leading and influential agency in forming and adopting, and, when formed and adopted, in maintaining, the constitution of government which we still enjoy; or, having come upon the stage at a later period, have received their political belief and impressions, justified, as they imagine, by strong evidence, from them.

It is well known that great efforts have been made a few years past, by spreading infidel books and forming infidel societies; by encouraging sectaries and strengthening their interest; by attempting to change the laws and annul the com-

pacts,* which provide for their subsistence ; and by publishing libels, destructive of their reputation, to bear down the former class of men, the congregational ministers. The love of monarchy, and the design of imposing upon the people a pompous and an oppressive hierarchy, that some of them, at least, might rise to deaneries and bishopricks ; a resistance of the just will of the people, toryism &c. have been imputed to them. They have been represented as, I know not how, combined, with the leaders of a reputed aristocracy, to overturn republican freedom, and either to throw the people back under the power of Great-Britain, or to sink them under a government equally oppressive. They have been denounced in publications, one of them domestic and very celebrated, and which, that the fame of its author might lose nothing by age, has recently had the honor of a new edition, threatening them with being shortly silenced, and given over, with their families, to want and penury, if they did not submit quietly to the triumphs of an administration which they verily believed was destroying their country.† The most of these Christian ministers I personally know, their sentiments and their course of action. With most of them I have been conversant in ministerial duty and acts of fellowship. They are my brethren. With pleasure I give my attestation in their favour. With alacrity will I go to martyrdom with them here, if Providence call to it, as I hope to go with them to glory hereafter. Where is the evidence which supports the justness of these imputations ? Nothing like evidence has ever been produced or can be produced. These insinuations I know to be false. A word savoring of monarchy has never polluted their lips. Not a thought of it has entered their hearts. To all hierarchies, which admit of honorable and lucrative Ecclesiastical preferments, they are decidedly opposed. They are so opposed to them as almost to think it an abandonment of their everlasting hopes to commune with an Episcopalian. They are friends of the people, firm and ardent. They are not monarchists. In politicks they are genuine republicans. When they go into the ministry, I speak of the main body

* Note [A.]

† Note [B.]

of them, their object is to serve their fellow men in regard to to their best interests, and this is their conscientious and prayerful endeavour through their ministry. This is their profession, and of the sincerity of their profession, you have a thousand proofs. This you ought to believe till you have some evidence to the contrary.

It is equally well known that the greater body of Washingtonian patriots and republicans, because they were not for going all the lengths of a tumultuous and foolish democracy, have been denounced as Tories and monarchists, traitors and tyrants.* A design to bring on a monarchy, or to get the nation back again under the power of Great-Britain has been imputed to them. Under the force of these representations and odious epithets, daring individuals have been excited to treat them with oppressive, and injurious violence, and, in some recent instances, with outrage and murder. Where is the evidence of the truth of these imputations? Is it in the self-consistency of their principles, and their zeal for the preservation of the Constitution and of the Independence of their Country? Is it in their attachment to the person, and sentiments, and policy of Washington? Is it in their preference of the neutrality he endeavoured to maintain, to all alliances with foreign governments? Is it in their wish to secure to the American people such a profitable commercial intercourse with Great-Britain as will take your surplus produce off your hands, which is useless to you, and give you, in return for it, their valuable manufactures, which, while it feeds the families of thousands of poor manufacturers in their dominions, would give a spring to industry, and multiply improvements in your own Country? Is it in their abstinence from every thing like insurrection and rebellion, and their adherence to the laws, and their obedience to them, when, in their judgment, they are partial and oppressive? Is it in the zeal with which they generally countenance and support those valuable literary and religious institutions, which have been transmitted to us by our ancestors, and without the maintenance and influence

* Note [C.]

of which we must inevitably revert back to barbarous ignorance, and all the stupidity of heathenism? Is it in their preference of peace to the confusions and desolations of war? Or is it in the fifty thousand dollars' worth expositions of Henry? Miserable evidence! Poor support to the mere clamour of words! Depend upon it, my hearers, these are all scarish tales, invented and propagated to answer a purpose. These people are as far from being tories and monarchists; as far from whatever partakes of subjugation to a foreign power, or national suicide; they are as far from wishing to introduce any measures which shall impede the public prosperity, as Warren, or Montgomery, or Mercer, or any of the brave heroes were, whom you have been accustomed to eulogize in your annual republican festivals.

They deplore indeed that moral declension, which has turned us away from the sober habits of the first planters of New-England. They deplore, and it is confessed that, keeping themselves within their constitutional rights, they do resist, that mistaken policy which began wrong, and has been perpetually going from bad to worse; which has sunk your national character in the eyes of all mankind; which has denied bread to poor and suffering foreigners, when we had abundance of it to spare, and oppressed a large proportion of your fellow-citizens; which has destroyed your revenues, exhausted your treasury, and palsied your arm; which has almost annihilated your commerce, and is about to press you down with a heavy direct taxation; a policy, which, in their judgments, was bringing, and which a leading member of the majority in Congress explicitly acknowledged had brought, you into that situation, that the cord put about your neck had only to be drawn a little tighter, and you would expire. They labour to wrest the Country from this thralldom; and to restore it to its former independence and prosperity. Is this wrong? No, it is right. Then it is a serious and solemn question, which you are called upon this day to resolve, whether you are not sacredly bound to recal these foul aspersions, and take off these restraints; to loose these bands of wickedness, and undo these heavy burdens; to let

your oppressed fellow-citizens and Country go free, and and break every yoke ; to deal your bread to the hungry, and hide not yourselves from your own flesh.—This apology is,

III. To respect the nature of the heresy denounced.— We will remember it is, *disagreement with the administration of our government in the character it has chosen to assume, in the course it has taken since it went into operation, in its restrictive measures, and particularly in regard to the war into which it has recently plunged the nation.* This, which they call heresy, we contend is legitimate and sound doctrine ; and while the evidence lies before us as it does, and especially as it is so incontrovertibly founded in all things which are written in the law, and the prophets, we frankly declare, that we must, according to it, worship the God of our fathers. Our prayers and adorations must be in coincidence with, and cannot be opposed to, it. To defend this heresy it is not necessary that we should go back to the original character of the administration, or trace its winding progress through the twelve tedious years that are past. It is not necessary to look after the effects of the restrictive system, which, whatever was its *intention* with respect to France, was, *in fact*, perfectly coincident with that new species of warfare, which her relentless and aspiring Emperor, had undertaken to prosecute against a rival government, which he determined, by fair or by foul, to overwhelm, and thus open his way to universal empire ; and which was designed to coerce Great-Britain, by augmenting the miseries of thousands of its poor manufacturers, and thus forcing them into insurrections. Something of this effect this system could not but have. But it could not produce such an effect upon so extensive a scale, as to warrant it, even if it were just ; because many of its former advocates have, upon experiment, frankly acknowledged its inefficacy and folly ; and because, while it scourged Great-Britain with whips, it scourged our own Country with scorpions. It is not necessary, I say, to trace the effects of these measures inasmuch as their character is more distinctly exposed in that they have result-

ed in the far more interesting event of war; an event more closely connected with religious considerations; an event in which conscience is deeply concerned, and in regard to which we have a high responsibility to God. The heresy alleged against us is denounced by the administration and its adherents on this account principally, that it is opposed to this war. We lament the war, and wish its termination as speedily as possible. We are for peace, and would worship the God of our fathers, in the spirit, in the security, in the practice of all the attendant virtues, and in the enjoyment of all the attendant comforts, of peace. With this desire, and with benevolent regards to the country against which we are called upon to lift the hand of slaughter, which we consider as maintaining, at an immense expense, a noble struggle with a power, treading, as fast as it can proceed, upon all the governments of the world, and which embosoms thousands and thousands of our Christian brethren, we oppose the war. This opposition is the peculiarly offensive feature of the heresy. And here we are ready with our defence. This defence cannot, because the occasion would not justify it, and it need not, go into those minute points of controversy which relate to national law, to treaties, and questions of right, which perhaps are not perfectly understood, even by many learned civilians, and which properly belong to diplomatic discussion. Surely no disagreement upon these points ought to draw a reasonable people into a war, and especially an offensive one. The defence will be general, and in views which will probably be plain to the most of my auditors.

In the first place, we are not bound to acquiesce in this war, and cooperate with the administration in prosecuting it merely because it is declared by the government. To say that we ought to approve of the war and unite with its advocates in prosecuting it, merely because it is an act of the government, is to say, that the rights of judgment, and of conscience are all absorbed in its will; that passive obedience and non-resistance only belong to us; that we are to make no enquiries, and never utter a word expressive of our opinions; and that, though the determinations of government are counter to the express

requirements of God, and so founded in *moral wrong* as to impel us forward to mere scenes of plunder and butchery ; or so *absurd* as to require us to shut ourselves up in our respective dwellings until we bring on disease and famine, and expire in one promiscuous death, they must nevertheless be obeyed. We appeal to the scripture, which expressly declares, that " we ought to obey God rather than men." We appeal to the pious, and independently heroic resolutions of the three captive Jews, whose example is evidently put down for our imitation, and who boldly said to the proud monarch of Babylon, " But if not, be it known unto thee O king, that we will not serve thy God, nor worship the golden image thou hast set up." We appeal to all the martyrdoms which adorn the Christian history, which have been submitted to rather than obey commands counter to the spirit, the objects, and the precepts of Christianity. We appeal to the examples of our ancestors ; and we ask, Where, upon the principle of such a profound submission to arbitrary will, is to be found the defence of our Revolution ?

In the second place, this opposition is defensible, in that it is in the exercise of those rights which the Constitution guarantees, and does not operate in tumult, insurrection, rebellion and outrage. It is merely an expression of sentiment, an orderly cooperation, in pursuing such measures as are supposed to have the most direct and powerful tendency to restore peace, and a declining to do those things which might be promotive of the war, but which neither the constitution nor the laws require. This orderly appearance of the opposition is an index of its nature, especially when contrasted with the usurpations, the tumults, the insurrections and scenes of outrage there have been on the other side ; and presents a strong presumptive argument, at least, that it is right. Let us not be highly criminated till we attempt to force down the constitution, or violate the laws.*

5. This opposition is defensible upon the ground that the war is most plainly repugnant to the entire spirit, and the express precepts of our holy religion. This is not a defensive

* Note [D.]

war. It cannot, with any propriety, be pretended to be so. A defensive war is one which repels an invading enemy, and whose life you take away merely to save your own. A simple pretext of injury, in property or some other way, does not make a war defensive. What offensive war has there ever been, which was not ostensibly grounded upon such a pretext? Real injury, affecting partially the minor interests of society, and which is short of an attempt upon the independence of a community or an invasion of its territory, cannot give to a war, on the part of those who declare it, and who are first in warlike operations, the character of defensive.*—Where and when have you been invaded? What part of your country has been overrun by the British forces? Nothing like this appears.

It is said indeed that the savages have been instigated to make war upon our frontiers. This is said; but no evidence of it appears. But suppose it could be proved that this has been done by some unprincipled individuals, or even some subordinate officers of the British government—Does it follow that it has been done by the government itself? Is it not to be supposed that there are many cases, on both sides, in which individuals do wrong, without any authority whatever from the government to do so, and against both its interest and its will? And will you rush on the master, and put him and all his family to death, because one of his apprentices has done you an injury? And have you remonstrated to the government, respecting this supposed covert attack upon the inhabitants of your frontiers, and waited for a reply to this remonstrance? Has not the minister and representative of this government near your own, come forward, without being asked for explanation, and, with an apparent earnest desire to shield his government from every such aspersion, and to inspire the American people with confidence that it is utterly without foundation, disavowed every kind and measure of such instigation? But there is a reason which is paramount to all others and perfectly conclusive, in my mind, against this, and many other similar allegations, that it has been decidedly the policy,

* Note [E.]

and the evidently strong desire, of the British government to be at peace with us. There are powerful reasons for this, which it is plain, they have very sensibly felt, and which, to a person of the least observation, are obvious. They had a potent and determined enemy to resist, who threatened them with invasion and destruction ; and to withstand whom, it required all their national energies to be brought into action.— And never has there been a moment when it was safe for them to intermit these exertions. They never could wish to add to the resistance they had to overcome the hostile, land and naval, armaments of this country. They had nothing to gain by a war with us. For the few captures they could make of our privateers and merchantships, would not probably exceed the number they would lose ; or, at best, the excess of captures must be worth less to them, beyond all comparison, than our trade ; and the subjugation of the country has ever been entirely out of the question. Our trade has been of great importance to them, not only for the nett profit of it, but to keep their numerous manufacturers in employment and satisfied, and they have studiously endeavoured to preserve it.

Farther proof we have in the protection often extended to our merchant vessels ; in their readiness to negotiate ; their missions of public agents to this country in succession, and notwithstanding some of them have been treated with indignity ; the liberality of several public acts in favor of our commerce ; and, last of all, which is a very recent event, the prompt, and unconditional manner in which they have revoked their decrees in Council, as soon as they became possessed of a proper revocation of the decrees of Berlin and Milan, by the French Emperor ; and their furnishing our ships, laden with valuable cargoes and leaving their dominions, with passports, securing them from capture by their ships of war, in confidence that our non-importation laws would be repealed, yet without the knowledge that they certainly would. With these things in view, it seems to me that no man in his sober senses can question, but that, as it has been certainly the policy so it has in fact been the strong desire, of the British government to remain at peace with us. And this ought to go far with us, and

indeed to be conclusive, unless we have very clear and indubitable evidence to the contrary, that these allegations are not founded in truth.

As to the impressment of our native seamen, which has been so long a subject of controversy, and interested the public feeling so deeply, there have been undoubtedly wrongs. But the evidence seems to be that they are reciprocal, the most aggravated, and perhaps the most numerous on their side. But this is a matter of negotiation. It has been once, at least, in a course of amicable adjustment, and would in fact have been adjusted, upon terms satisfactory to our own public ministers, if we had chosen to have it so. Their government have disclaimed the right of impressing native Americans, and of retaining them when impressed. And their public minister, Mr. Foster, has formally assured our government, that upon proper information and evidence, every such person should be sought out and released. We shall find nothing here then to prove that this war is a defensive war.

As to the other source of complaint, the blockade of a part of the coast of France, lining the English Channel; that is a point of doubtful disputation, and to us of trivial consequence, unless we choose to take part with the French Emperor in all his quarrels, and assist him, to the utmost of our ability, to subjugate the world. We then have declared this war against Great-Britain, and invaded their territories, when they gave us strong proofs of their reluctance to enter into the combat. Nor is it to be forgotten, if we would be impartial in our enquiries, that they have their complaints and pleas as well as we. If we complain that some of our seamen have been unjustly impressed; they complain that we have encouraged the desertion of their seamen, by holding out to them the prospect of high wages, and that personal liberty and safety which our laws of naturalization extend to them; and that we have in fact detached multitudes of them from their allegiance, and decoyed them into our mercantile service, to the great reduction of their physical means of defence.*

* Note [F.]

They have captured some of our vessels in execution of their decrees in Council. But they plead that these decrees are altogether defensive, and that the execution of them is essential to their existence, as a maritime and commercial nation, whose destruction their enemy was seeking by every mean in his power. Are we sure that this plea is not well founded, and that we ought not to have submitted to such a small reduction of our commercial profits rather than strengthen the hands of this cruel foe? The question then comes really to this; Have I a right to become the open enemy of my unoffending neighbour, who wishes to live peaceably by me, and to maintain an intercourse which shall be mutually advantageous? Have I a right to rise upon him, and to kill him, because he declines to submit to certain terms of doubtful equity which I prescribe to him? It appears to me that the conscience of every man, who has not a pretty strong inclination to shed the blood of his fellow creature, must determine instantly in the negative. And, What says the Scripture, that infallible authority, to which we are to appeal in all questions of moral right? To the enquiry, "Whence come wars and fightings among you;" it replies, by the farther enquiry, "Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?" One of its express laws is, "Thou shalt not kill." It tells you that he that hateth his brother is a murderer; and that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. It assures you that "he that doth wrong shall receive for the wrong that he hath done, and that there is no respect of persons." It informs you that "he that taketh the sword shall perish with the sword." It instructs you to recompense no man evil even for evil; and, if it be possible, as much as lieth in you, to live peaceably with all men. It pathetically entreats, "Dearly beloved, avengè not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath; for it is written, vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink, Be not overcome of evil; but overcome evil with good." It goes farther: your Redeemer thus addresses you, "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An

eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. But I say unto you that ye resist not evil, but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn the other also ; and if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also : And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Ye have heard that it hath been said, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, love your enemies ; bless them that curse you ; do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you ; that ye may be the children of your father which is in heaven ; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."

See then how the Scripture arrays itself, by clear and pathetic instructions, in defence of the heresy according to which we worship the God of our fathers !

Think, my brethren, of the spirit and effects of war. What malignant and furious passions does it excite ! What tumults and terrors, what disorders and crimes does it produce ! What desolations does it spread ! What scenes of horror does it present ! How opposite, in its nature, and in all its effects, to that charity which is so distinctly delineated by the sacred penmen, and of which our holy Redeemer was a perfect example ; which suffereth long and is kind ; which envieth not, and vaunteth not itself, which is not easily provoked, and thinketh no evil !

Farther, Our Lord gives us a lesson of wisdom which is particularly apposite to this subject. He asks "For which of you, intending to build a house, sitteth not down first and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to build it ? Lest, haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold him, begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build and was not able to finish. Or, What king, going to make war with another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth, whether he be able, with ten thousand, to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand : Or else, while the other is a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace. Upon

the strength of these lessons of a cautionary wisdom, I would therefore remark,

4. That it is a consideration which goes far indeed in defence of the heresy mentioned, that the war is entered upon, in the most inauspicious circumstances, and with scarce a shadow of a prospect of success, and with the moral certainty, if it proceeds, of extinguishing what remains of our foreign commerce, and bringing upon the nation a debt, and taxation which it will not be able to bear. Has our government sitten down wisely and estimated the strength of the nation they have made their enemy, and their own strength? Have they not done exactly otherways? Have they not first cut off their own arms, and then, with the bleeding stump, rushed on the object of their vengeance, shielded in every part, well armed to destroy, and of gigantic strength? Divided, as we are; the great majority in the northern sections of the country, where only the power of doing any thing effectually exists, decidedly opposed to the war; its advocates irresolute, at least in the point of quitting their homes, and offering themselves to the battle; a considerable debt already upon our hands; our commerce and revenue next to annihilated; our treasury exhausted, and without a navy, how great is our weakness! And is not the nation we have challenged to this combat shielded in every part, and of gigantic strength? Is not their ability perpetually on the increase, notwithstanding they have carried on a long war with the greatest power in the world, next to themselves? Are not their dominions, their population, and their means immense? Have they not a prodigious force on the land, organized in every part of it, and ready for action? And how very powerful is their marine? Have they lost a foot of ground for the few years past, or a single battle? How invariably do they triumph at sea! Already do their ships of war line our coasts, and spread destruction among our privateers and merchant vessels. This is in consequence of our declaring war against them. And where will the destruction stop? We are to calculate merely upon loss, vast expenditures, and national degradation. Expedience then comes in strongly to the support of the heresy,

according to which we think it our duty to worship the God of our fathers.

In the fifth and last place, this opposition is reasonable and just, and even a matter of most imperious necessity, because there are such clear indications of an understanding, and a coalition between our administration, and the imperial despot of Europe ; aiding his nefarious designs, and, in its proper tendency, subjecting us to his will. Not to descend to minute particulars, which have been noticed by writers well acquainted with these subjects, we need only look at the aspect of palpable and undisguised facts. Have we not Frenchmen in office ? Have we not Frenchmen in our cities who are ardent in their national partialities, and who feel themselves under so much countenance here, that they dare to attempt to exasperate the citizens against each other, and to subvert the government ; dare to trample on the laws, stop the course of public information, and tumultuously and murderously, and by unparalleled barbarities, to take away the lives of our citizens ? Has not the French Emperor told us that he will have no neutrals, and that in fact we were at war with Great-Britain, long before the formal declaration of it ? Have not our restrictive measures been in perfect agreement with his continental system ? Has not the declaration of war exactly coincided with his wishes and expectations ? Has he not relaxed, and finally revoked, his decrees, in respect to us, upon this ground ? Was not the declaration of war a matter of congratulation between its advocates in Congress, and the French minister at the elbow of our cabinet ? Does not the war operate in favour of the Emperor's designs, just as though it was in fact in obedience to his will ? Then, if the evidence falls something short of conclusively proving a coalition which amounts to a proper alliance, or rather a vassal subjection, it is of such an aspect as to be greatly alarming, and as furnishes abundant cause to deplore this war, and to induce us to make every practicable effort to bring it to a close as soon as possible.

Could a greater calamity befall the country than for it to be completely caught in the toils of this relentless oppressor of

the human family ? What an abject condition should we be in ! How great would be our fall ! How irretrievable our ruin ! What a melancholy contrast to that manly independence and unexampled prosperity which we enjoyed under the first administrations of our government ! Look over the interior of Continental Europe, where not long ago kingdoms and republics stood and prospered ; where deliberative assemblies acted with independence and effect, and the voice of numerous authorities was heard. A death-like silence now reigns over all. Not a motion but what is in obedience to individual will. Not one dares pour his complaints into the bosom of another. The deep-drawn sigh is half suppressed. The sunburnt female, whose hands draw from the soil the means of her subsistence, dares not audibly express her grief to the enquiring traveller, that her brothers have been torn away from her afflicted parents to serve in the armies.* Are we prepared to precipitate ourselves into a state of degradation and misery bordering upon this ? If we would not, let us, as fast as we can, get back again to peace, impartiality, and independence.

In a very few words the apology is to shew,

IV. What will be the salutary and benign effects, should this heresy triumph over our country, and supersede, by a general influence, that philosophic and political orthodoxy, which, to our eye, is a mere system of infidelity, infatuation and ruin. These effects are obvious. From past experience and the nature of the case we may conclude, that our divisions would be removed, and union would be restored to us, as a people ; that cabal, and tumult and riot would cease ; that the wounds inflicted on our country would be healed ; that peace would immediately take place upon honorable terms ; that commerce would be restored to its full vigor ; that the public credit would be raised ; that a new spring would be given to useful improvements ; that religion would be disembarassed of many of its present impediments ; that the freedom of debate and of the press would be recovered ; that ambitious demagogues, and office-seekers, and men of mere party,

* This is not mere painting. Such cases have actually come under the view of travellers.

would cease to mislead the public mind, by their misrepresentations and falsehoods ; that the elective franchise would be unlimitedly enjoyed and rightly exercised ; and that, in consequence, men of integrity and talents would be raised to office ; that dignity, independence and wisdom, would characterize our public councils ; and that the nation would live in prosperity at least a little longer. " If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity ; if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry and satisfy the afflicted soul ; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness shall be as the noon day. And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones ; and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not." Isaiah lviii, 10.

Then let us be penitently humble, for every thing, in respect to our God, our country, and one another, wherein our consciences convict us of wrong, particularly in regard to the calamitous war, in which, not " the injustice of a foreign power ;" * but our own misguided policy and folly have involved us. Let us worship God, according to righteousness, and pray for the success of our arms so far as, and no farther than, they are employed in support of a cause which he himself can approve. Let us mingle with our penitential contritions and acknowledgements, grateful praise to God that he has disposed the government of Great-Britain, with such a promptitude and unconditionality, as soon as they had information of the revocation of the decrees of Berlin and Milan, in respect to American vessels, and before they had any knowledge of our declaration of war, to annul their orders in council ; and, by thus removing, what some influential advocates of the administration have acknowledged to be, the only proper ground of the war, rendering the restoration of a speedy peace, a matter of the fairest calculation, if not of inevitable necessity.

And if there be those present who still choose to consider and treat our opposition to this war, as a dangerous heresy,

* Proclamation.

let them be intreated to give *us* at least that liberty of thinking, speaking and acting which *they* claim ; and I will conclude by only saying to them in this regard, in the words of St. Paul, which he uttered on the occasion of making a subsequent apology before another civil magistrate, " Would to God ! that not only ye, but that all who are in the same judgment, were not only almost, but altogether, such as we are, except these bonds."

FINIS.

NOTES.

NOTE [A.]—Page 12.

LIBERTY of conscience is a dear privilege. It has full scope in this Country, and the clamor of sectarians is utterly without ground. To build upon this claim, doctrines and measures which leave nothing permanent ; which, in effect, annul solemn covenants, and contradict our commonest notions of honesty, is merely to use liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, or covetousness, or licentiousness. Instead of strengthening civil government, it subverts it. It is directly in the face of the constitution of this Commonwealth, which declares that, "the legislature shall, from time to time, authorize and require, the several towns, parishes, precincts, and other bodies politic or religious, to make suitable provision at their own expence, for the institution of the public worship of God, and for the support and maintenance of public protestant teachers of piety and religion." How idle are all laws to this purpose, if they undo themselves by provisional relaxations ; if they warrant the individuals, who have deliberately acted in forming a contract for the support of such a teacher, to break away, at any moment, from the obligations of the contract, and deny the support they promised to furnish ! Better have no legislation than to have it so extravagantly absurd. The Baptists are the most clamorous for such a prostration of constitution and law. And alas ! they have not clamored without effect. It is hoped and believed that the Judiciary will stand firm in defence of the Constitution, and treat as mere nullities, as the mere offspring of a disorganizing democracy, all laws evidently subversive of it. Let us have full-grown liberty, but no dwarfish licentiousness.

NOTE [B.]—Page 12.

A FARMER : No. 10. Such is the strain of malediction in this prudent disclosure of feeling. "In this liberty (the voluntary election and support of ministers) and in the political causes which have and are every day disgusting it, if they are continued, we foresee the downfall of federal clergymen.—Already has the forgiving spirit plead for clergymen seventy times seven.—Adverse combinations, oppugnations, disrespect, reproach, and systematic revil-

ings are (in the essence and nature of the crimes) sedition, treason, and rebellion.—Justice, duty, religion and patriotism, would not hesitate to denounce such an individual an outrageous offender, and to treat him as an outlaw.—If an individual, obligated by professional ties, holding the keys, and dispensing the seals of the Old and New Covenant, should do this, he would be considered as deserving every thing that the injured could take, or the insulted and betrayed could inflict.” Thus, in exact coincidence with the infidel hatreds, and revolutionary projects of the philosopher of Ferney, this writer spread the watchword of the downfall and slaughter of all the federal congregational ministers of New-England, who were forty-nine out of fifty. It was this downfall which his prophetic eye foresaw (for, he knew they were conscientious men, and would continue in the same course of fidelity to God and their Country) and which he revealed, therefore which he gave his voice to have effected. He gave the watchword of their slaughter, I say ; for this is the fair construction of his words ; nay, they admit of no other meaning. For he who is an outlaw is put beyond the protection of the law, and any body may kill him with impunity. He who would justly be considered as deserving every thing that the injured could take, or the insulted and betrayed could inflict, would certainly be obnoxious to a violent death. The proceeding is to be without trial, summary, and popular. And what is the crime which is of this malignant character, and which this temperate writer denominates sedition, treason, and rebellion ? Why, it is receiving the Palladium, when sent to them gratuitously, and expressing, with some independence of thought, occasionally, their opinions of public men and measures. We forgive this writer. We pity him. We wish him well with all our heart. But we are ashamed that such an ebullition of despotism and malignity should ever have emanated from a press in New-England. And we are constrained to say, that if he remains of the some dispositions, towards honest clergymen, who dare to follow evidence and conscience, he ought to have been sent for to act as lieutenant to the French Apothecary at Mobtown.

With this may be joined, as a kindred effusion, the anathama found in the string of Resolutions passed by the Middlesex Assemblage of Republican Delegates, in Concord, SAMUEL HOAR, Esq. Moderator, and, as is supposed, the Honorable, the President of the Senate, amanuensis.

“ Resolved that those professed teachers of religion, who have perverted their vocations to party purposes, and have become the

apostles of sedition, the priests of discord and the ministers of faction, calumniating their rulers, and speaking evil of dignities, are rebels against Heaven and traitors to their Country, and, as they have withdrawn from the duties of their calling, from their obligations, as Christians and citizens, so citizens and Christians should withdraw from their employment and support." Reader, Would you not imagine from the aspect of this resolution, that a large proportion of the Congregational Clergy in the County of Middlesex had abandoned their pulpits, and their professional duties, and gone up and down the Country, like Peter the Hermit, preaching a crusade against the government, causelessly villifying its public agents, for the mere purpose of spreading the flame of a civil war? Whereas, they are all quietly at their homes, and discharging, as ever, their pastoral functions; and no such character exists in the Commonwealth, unless in the precincts of Dracut. Would you not imagine that these exclusive patriots were warranted by the Supreme Being to act as his vicars in the great affair of judging the world? Yet, perhaps, few men would be put to more difficulty to furnish evidence of their participation in his counsels. And how adhesive this is to humanity and honesty! They object calumny to these ministers. Yet, with the same breath, they impute to them treason against their Country, which is a capital offence. Let SAMUEL HOAR, Esq. whose name is at the bottom of these resolutions, designate the individuals. If he dares not do it, let him acknowledge himself an assassin of clerical reputation.

NOTE [C.]—Page 13.

As a specimen see another of the Middlesex Resolutions.—
 "Resolved that we view with detestation the traitorous conspirators against the integrity of the Union, the allies of our enemy who remain among us; that we will observe them with jealous and scrutinizing exactness, until public sentiment shall consign them to a Country and a government, more congenial to their wishes, and more suited to the ignoble temper of slaves." This makes us think of Marcus T. Cicero in exile, and Julius Cæsar, after wading through seas of the blood of Roman citizens, adorned with the imperial diadem. Though it behoves not Christians to render threatening for threatening, yet, in point of prudence, it may be well for these modern Cæsars to remember that in Rome there was a Brutus.

NOTE [D.]—Page 17.

Every friend to the Revolution, and to the liberties of his Country ought to express, on all proper occasions, his abhorrence of those numerous attempts which have been made, by the advocates of the administration, coercively to silence opposition, and, by infractions of the Constitution and laws, to perpetuate their power. They have endeavored to destroy majorities by fraudulent impositions and by cabal, and to restrain the freedom of the press and of debate. But the plan which was adopted, by the late democratic legislature, for districting the Commonwealth, evidently designed to perpetuate the power of a party in the Senate, though the voice of the people should be distinctly against that party, and call loud for a relief from their ruinous measures; is such a specimen of sheer Cromwellism, is such a close imitation of the dexterity, with which their dear fellow-laborer, Bonaparte, threw himself upon the saddle of government, that it ought to be singled out as an object of peculiar odium. Where is the modesty of the present majority in the Senate, that, in the face of this great Commonwealth, and near where Warren fell, abusing the name and the nature of republicanism, trampling on her precepts, and casting her honors to the ground, they dare to shew themselves in the exercise of power assumed, and not constitutionally given! This is a foul blot upon the history of Massachusetts. Let Hutchinson, and Arnold, and Bidwell, be forgotten. Let all eyes be fixed upon this majority. Let their proceedings be written with the point of a diamond, that posterity may read, and learn to distinguish between false and true patriots.

NOTE [E.]—Page 18.

"Offensive wars are those which are made to constrain others to give us our due, in virtue of a perfect right we have to exact it of them, or to obtain satisfaction for a damage unjustly done us, and to force them to give caution for the future.—We must therefore affirm, in general, that the first who takes up arms, whether justly or unjustly, commences an offensive war, and he who opposes him, whether with, or without reason, begins a defensive war."

Burlinaqui on the Principles of Nat. and Pol. Law.

NOTE [F.]—Page 22.

"Much less ought she (the neutral) to complain, if she entices by high rewards, and countenances by fraudulent protections, such seamen of the belligerent, in deserting the standard of their country.

"Mr. Madison's War," by a New-England Farmer, page 12, the production of a fertile and accurate mind, replete with unanswerable argument, and profound discussion, which every American citizen ought to possess, and again and again to peruse.

"It must be then that the reason why they (the British) insist upon this right is, that they would wish to check the disposition of their own seamen to enter into our service, of whom it is admitted on all hands, we have at least from 30, to 50,000." page 14th.

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